

## SURFACE PASTEURIZATION METHOD

### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for processing a food product involves transporting the food product through a plurality of stations including a loading station, a  
5 pasteurization station, and a closing station. The surface of the food product is pasteurized by convectively transferring heat from the pasteurizing medium to the surface of the food product at a rate such that the surface heat transfer coefficient becomes sufficiently higher than the food product conductance coefficient that the  
10 surface temperature of the food product is substantially instantaneously elevated above temperatures which are instantly lethal to microbes which may be present. Preferably, steam is condensed on the food product surface in dropwise condensation, and the onset of film condensation is retarded by removing condensate film from such surface.